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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EUR/SE, EUR/PD, NEA/PD, DRL  
JCS PASS J-5/CDR S. WRIGHT

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TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [TU](#)  
SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT  
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 2008

#### In Today's Papers

Court Suspends YOK Order Concerning Turban in Universities  
All papers report the Council of State (Danistay), which is the High Court of Administrative Appeals, suspended a controversial headscarf-related directive yesterday. Higher Education Board (YOK) President Yusuf Ziya Ozcan distributed the order, which instructed all university rectors to allow students wearing headscarves to enter campuses and classes. The order was distributed the Sunday after parliament passed constitutional reforms regarding the turban. The Danistay determined the law does not provide sole authority to the YOK President to issue such directives, which renders this order ineffective. Mainstream Hurriyet expects the court decision will end the turban controversy in universities.

Papers Speculate Admiral Fallon Resigns over Iran  
Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Taraf, Cumhuriyet, Yeni Safak and others report Centcom Commander Admiral William Fallon, "the commander who suggested Turkey negotiate with the PKK," has resigned. Papers speculate Fallon resigned over disagreements with the Bush Administration about a possible war with Iran. Mainstream Milliyet writes in "The Commander Who Suggests Negotiations with the PKK Resigned," noting "the common opinion concerning the reason for his resignation is he disagrees with George Bush's politics concerning Iran." Leftist nationalist Cumhuriyet reports in "He went against the Iran Political Line: A Surprise Resignation from Fallon, Who Wanted Negotiations with the PKK," that "Esquire Magazine ran an article which called Fallon 'the only voice against a military response to Iran.'" Liberal Radikal reports in "Fallon Leaves; Is a War with Iran Coming?" that Fallon has said "the Iraq war is the biggest obstacle," to US military action against Iran, but that "Bush and Cheney are expected to say they will strike Iran this year." Islamist-oriented Zaman writes, "Fallon surprised people with his resignation yesterday."

Cheney Due in Turkey to Seek Support on Iran, Afghanistan  
Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Taraf, Zaman, Yeni Safak and others report Turkey will be the last stop in Vice President Dick

Cheney's Middle East tour, which begins March 16. Papers comment Cheney will ask for Turkey's support for moves against Iran, and is expected to discuss missile defense and Afghanistan. Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports the topics in "Cheney's handbag," include "missile defense in Eastern Europe, new sanctions against Iran, the PKK problem, Israel-Palestine, and cross-border operations into northern Iraq."

Islamist-oriented Zaman writes Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell confirmed press reports Defense Secretary Robert Gates told President Gul and Prime Minister Erdogan the US wants to install missile defense systems in Turkey "against possible missile attacks from Iran."

#### Polemic Continues Between the PM and the Opposition

All papers report that the prime minister and the leaders of the opposition continued their debates over controversial military and political issues. Prime Minister Erdogan focused on the controversial social security reform bill. Erdogan accused labor unions of telling lies and said "Turkey cannot afford to delay social security reform any further; we cannot carry this burden any longer. When the social security reform bill enters into effect, all workers' rights will be protected." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports that Chairman of the DISK (Revolutionary Labor Union) Suleyman Celebi said, "the government is attacking pension and health care rights which he qualified as the 'twin towers' for workers." During his speech at the CHP parliamentary group meeting, Deniz Baykal targeted the government and said, "the land operation in northern Iraq had ended sooner than planned because of the influence of the US." In response to PM Erdogan's criticism that the opposition party CHP should have solved the Qandil problem when they were in power, CHP Leader Baykal retorted, "The problem with

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Qandil emerged during the AKP government's administration, not ours. You are responsible for Qandil." MHP leader Bahceli addressed his party's parliamentary group and ended the arguments between the TGS and the opposition parties. He said, "the Turkish Military conducted its task with success; it is the AKP government that should be held accountable on this issue. During the land operation into northern Iraq, the US consciously put pressure on Turkey and the PM could not hold up under US pressure."

#### A New Process Commences Regarding DTP

Sabah, Hurriyet, Milliyet, Yeni Safak, Cumhuriyet and others: Mainstream Sabah gives extensive front page coverage to the mainly Kurdish DTP delegation that was received by the State offices. The headline reads, "A New Process in Ankara." Papers report that the state doors, which have been closed to the Democratic Social Party (DTP) for months, are now opening one after another. Following their meetings with the Speaker of the Parliament Koksall Toptan and Minister Cemil Cicek, DTP members were received by President Gul yesterday. Reportedly, during the meeting with the Parliament Speaker Koksall Toptan, the speaker warned that the DTP should distance itself from the PKK. The DTP delegation asked for constitutional freedoms and cultural rights. Mainstream Hurriyet describes the DTP meeting with President Gul as "historic." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet says that DTP officials requested an appointment from PM Erdogan but Erdogan passed the request on to Deputy PM Cemil Cicek.

Meanwhile, papers report that Court of Appeals Chief Prosecutor Abdurrahman Yalcinkaya presented his arguments regarding DTP's closure to the Constitutional Court yesterday. He emphasized that the DTP should be closed down, urgently, and that the evidence presented is enough to close the party. He also call for a political ban on 220 people, including Ahmet Turk, Aysel Tugluk, Osman Baydemir and Nurettin Demirtas.

#### Editorial Commentary on the Upcoming NATO Summit in Bucharest

##### "Water and Security"

Erdal Safak wrote in mainstream Sabah (3/12): "The correlation between environment and security has become a major priority for NATO. The upcoming NATO summit has listed security threats posed by global warming as one of its top priorities. Prior to the NATO

summit, EU leaders will get a chance to discuss the same issue a great deal. The leaders of 27 nations will assess a report concluding that global warming will impact international security. The report, prepared by EU representative Javier Solana, has some nightmarish conclusions, including mass migration and massive floods. Solana even predicts some countries will be wiped off the map due to rising ocean levels. The means the planet is, in fact, moving toward a point of no return. The EU report mentions Turkey and the Middle East specifically, warning about serious social and political destabilization due to a shortage in water resources. Given the environmental developments around the world, it seems that we are heading toward a global war for water. There is an urgent need for the establishment of a new international organization, like the UN, in order to control water resources around the world and to treat them as common possession of humanity."

#### "NATO Summit"

Umur Talu commented in mainstream Sabah (3/12): "We have every right to ask our leaders: Will Turkey send combat troops to Afghanistan? Why is Cheney visiting Ankara? What are his demands? Are we going to say "no" if he asks Turkey to send combat troops to Afghanistan? The upcoming NATO summit in Bucharest will address the Afghanistan issue extensively. Of the 26 NATO member countries, only 9 have troops in the combat zone of Afghanistan. These nine countries are threatening to withdraw their troops unless others contribute forces to the combat zone. As the US Joint Chiefs of Staff and the UN Secretary General say, the clashes in Afghanistan are getting worse. With this in mind, it seems inevitable that

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Ankara will be asked to send combat troops to Afghanistan. However, it is not clear how the Turkish leadership will react to such a demand. If Turkey complies with such a demand, we citizens will have every right to question this judgment."

#### TV Highlights CNN Turk

#### Domestic News

- Labor unions in Izmir staged protests against current proposals for social security reforms.
- The Diyarbakir prosecutor demands prison sentences of up to two years for 56 pro-Kurdish DTP mayors. The mayors sent a letter to Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen which asked the Danish government not to close Roj TV. This broadcast station is based in Copenhagen and is largely viewed as the mouthpiece of the PKK.
- The Diyarbakir prosecutor demands a five-year prison sentence for Mayor Osman Baydemir in connection with a speech delivered in a Kurdish meeting in London.

#### International News

- Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica said he expects the upcoming elections will confirm the policy that only a Serbia that includes Kosovo can continue towards European integration.
- On Tuesday, Foreign Minister Ali Babacan held talks with his Iraqi counterpart Hoshyar Zebari during the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) meetings in Dakar, Senegal.
- Turkish Cyprus is preparing to open a trade and business office in Tel Aviv.

WILSON